United Nations ECE/CEP/AC.13/2014/4

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
10 January 2014

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development

Ninth meeting
Geneva, 3 and 4 April 2014
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda
Getting ready for the future — continuing implementation after the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries in 2016

Outcomes of the nineteenth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy concerning education for sustainable development

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The implementation framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development defines three phases of implementation, with the third phase coming to an end in 2015 (CEP/AC.13/2005/4/Rev.1). To assess the progress made under the Strategy since its adoption in 2005, and to consider the continuation of implementation, the ECE Steering Committee for Education for Sustainable Development proposed to hold a high-level session on education for sustainable development for education and environment ministries at the next "Environment for Europe" (EfE) Ministerial Conference. The secretariat was mandated to inform the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP), which decides on the agenda of the next EfE Ministerial Conference, about this proposal. This note by the secretariat outlines the respective outcomes of the discussions held at the nineteenth CEP meeting (Geneva, 22–25 October 2013).

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I. Background

1. The most recent high-level meeting organized under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development was held at the Sixth "Environment for Europe" (EfE) Ministerial Conference in Belgrade in 2007. In Belgrade, ECE Ministers agreed that the Strategy was a unique example of regional implementation of education for sustainable development (ESD) among the different initiatives developed in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014), and that it could serve as an example for other regions. In their joint statement on ESD (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/4/Add.1), the Ministers expressed their commitment to the further implementation of the Strategy and extended the mandate of the Steering Committee on ESD to oversee the regional implementation of the Strategy until 2015.

2. Moreover, the Ministers stressed that high-level meetings on ESD should be held regularly as part of the EfE conferences.

II. Decisions relevant to organizing a high-level session of education and environment ministries on education for sustainable development at the next Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

3. At its eighth meeting in March 2013, the ECE Steering Committee on ESD voiced its strong commitment to continue implementing the Strategy for ESD on the regional level beyond implementation phase III (see ECE/CEP/AC.13/2013/2). To assess the progress made under the Strategy, and to consider the continuation of the Strategy's implementation, the Steering Committee proposed to hold a high-level session of education and environment ministries at the next EfE Ministerial Conference. The secretariat was asked to take all the necessary steps to inform the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) and its Bureau about the wish of the Steering Committee to hold such a high-level meeting. In particular, a formal presentation was to be held at the nineteenth CEP session (Geneva, 22–25 October 2013).

4. Following the secretariat's presentation at the nineteenth CEP session, the CEP:

(a) Supported the proposal presented by the secretariat to organize a high-level meeting of education and environment ministries in the framework of the next EfE Conference, as appropriate, in order to assess 10 years of ESD implementation and to consider the future implementation of the Strategy for ESD;

(b) Agreed with the CEP Bureau's recommendation to organize the eighth EfE Conference in 2016;

(c) Welcomed the information provided by Georgia regarding the possibility of Georgia's hosting the next EfE Conference, pending further internal governmental consultations;

(d) Mandated the CEP Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to prepare for the CEP session in 2014 an updated proposal for a possible framework for the next EfE Conference, taking into account the comments made by delegations at the nineteenth session.